

*The Rulers highest Dignity, and the People's
truest Glory.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the Audience of

His EXCELLENCY the

G O V E R N O U R,

The H O N O U R A B L E

His Majesty's Council,

And the Honourable

House of Representatives,

Of the Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay*,
in *New-England*, May 30th. 1739.

Being the Anniversary for the Election of His
Majesty's Council for the Province.

By *Peter Clark*, A. M. 

And Pastor of a Church in *Salem*.

B O S T O N:

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House of Representatives. MDCCLXXXIX.



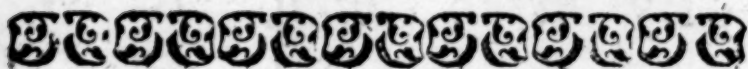
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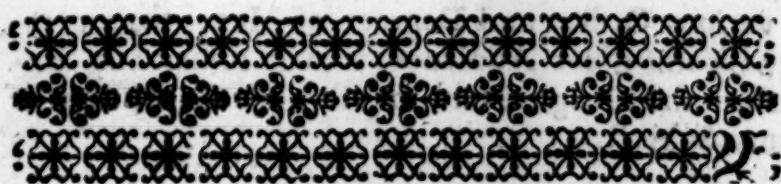
In the House of Representatives,

Jobis 31. Die Maij, A. D. 1739.

ORdered, That Mr. *William Browne*, and Mr. *Thomas Lee*, the Representatives of the Town of *Salem*, be directed to give the Thanks of the House to the Reverend Mr. *Peter Clark* of *Salem*, for his Sermon preached Yesterday before the General Court, (being the Anniversary for the Election of Councillors) and desire a Copy thereof for the Press.

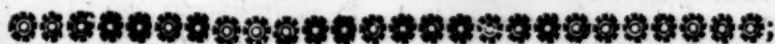
J. Quincy, Speaker.





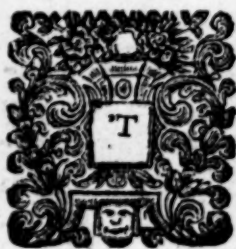
An Election

S E R M O N.



H O S E A XI. 12. *Latter Clause.*

— *But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the Saints.*



IS a very high Character and Commendation that is given in these Words of the Kingdom of *Judah*, both of Prince and People, on the Account of their steady Adherence to the divine Constitution of their Government, and to the Purity of sacred Institutions, when the ten Tribes had for a long Time apostatiz'd to idolatrous Worship. And a brighter Representation could scarce be given in so few Words, of the true Interest and Glory of a professing People. If therefore the opening of this Character, and displaying some of the Beauties and Advantages of it, according to the Measure of the Gift I have received, may be of Use to excite a pious Emulation in the Rulers and People of this Land, and the various

various Orders and Degrees of Men, that compose this great Audience, it will sufficiently answer the Design I had in view in the Choice of my Subject.

Concerning this Prophet *Hosea*, whose Words I have read, we may observe, That it appears from the Date of his Prophecy, that he was one of the ancientest of the Prophets who penn'd their Prophecies, and continued longest in the Discharge of the prophetical Function, during the successive Reigns of several Kings; for the Word of the Lord came unto him in the Days of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Abaz*, and *Hezekiah*, Kings of *Judah*; and in the Days of *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Joash*, King of *Israel*: (Chap. i. i.) The Prophecy consists of Reproofs, and Convictions of Sin, and Comminations of divine Judgments for the awakening a secure People, and serious and urgent Exhortations to Repentance, address'd both to the Kingdom of *Israel* and *Judah*.

I shall not spend Time on the Context, the Connection of the Verse of our Text, being variously understood by Interpreters; some making it the Close of the eleventh Chapter; others, * with greater Probability, understand it as the Beginning of a new Discourse, which the Prophet continues in the following Chapter, upbraiding the apostate *Israelites*, with their Defection from the true Worship of GOD, and the Faith and Piety of their Ancestors, and with their vain Confidence in an Arm of Flesh; and upon Conviction thereof, exhorting them to Amendment, and a penitent Return to the Lord their GOD. But it may

* Vide Rivet: Comment: in Hoseam: Pol: Synopf: in Loc.
conduce

conduce not a little to the clearing of the Words, to take some Notice of the opposite Clause of the Verse, *Ephraim compasseth me about with Lies, and the House of Israel with Deceit.* *Ephraim* put in Distribution with *Israel*, as here, is commonly used to denote the House of the King, the Princes and Rulers of *Israel*; *Jeroboam*, who headed the Revolt from the House of *David*, and the Defection from the instituted Worship of GOD at *Jerusalem*, being a Man of that Tribe. And by the House of *Israel* is meant the Body of the ten Tribes. That which they are charged with, is, That they compassed GOD about with Lies, and with Deceit. In which Words the Prophet taxes the Perfidiousness, Hypocrisy, and Idolatry of the *Israelites*; they pretended a mighty Veneration for the GOD of *Israel*, and Zeal for his Service; yet having deserted his own Institutions, and set up their Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and worshipping him by Images and Rites of their own Invention, it was all, in GOD's Account, *Deceit* and a *Lye*.

Perfidy, and Hypocrisy in Religion, is, in Scripture, called Lying to God. Psal. 78. 36. *They flattered him with their Mouth, and they lyed to him with their Tongues.* So likewise is Idolatry and False-worship; it being familiar in Scripture to term Idols, *Vanities*, and *Lies*, a *Work of Errors*, and *Teachers of Lies*. * They are lying Representations of the true GOD, who is a glorious incomprehensible Spirit, deceive their Worshipers, and frustrate the Confidence they repose in them.

To aggravate this Perfidiousness of *Israel*, the Prophet sets before them the Example of *Judab*, (comprehending the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and other

* Jer. 16. 19. Psal. 40. 4. Rom. 1. 25 Jer. 20. 15. Hab. 2. 18.
pious

pious *Israelites*, who adhered to the House of *David*, and the true Worship of GOD, after the Revolt of the ten Tribes) with an high Encomium of their Stedfastness and Integrity. *But Judab yet ruleth with GOD, and is faithful with the Saints.* It is a Description of the State of *Judab*, in it's best and purest Times. Here are two signal Instances of the Integrity of the two Tribes, mention'd to their Commendation.

1. That *Judah ruled with GOD.* This has a direct Aspect on the Princes and Rulers of *Judab*, who were peculiarly design'd by GOD to the Government of the Kingdom: They ruled with GOD, as his Delegates, executing their Commission for his Honour and Interest, and according to the Direction of his Laws. Some indeed give us this general Meaning of the Words, *Judab* persisted faithfully in the Service of GOD, following him as their Guide and Ruler; for *to serve GOD, is to rule with him.* The Gloss, I confess, seems rather ingenious than solid; for, however true it be (and a great Truth doubtless it is, tho' a Paradox to the World) that "The Service of GOD is not only true Liberty and Freedom, but Dignity and Dominion." Yet that *Ruling* here is to be understood in its proper Signification, appears from the tacit Opposition between *Ephraim* and the *House of Israel* on the one Hand, and *Judab* on the other. *Ephraim*, the royal Tribe, that is, the Rulers of *Israel*, are suppos'd to *rule without GOD*, when they fell to Idolatry; yea, it was their Ambition, and Lust of Domination, which was the Cause of their casting off the true Worship of GOD; for this politick Reason it was, that *Jeroboam* set up the idolatrous Worship of the golden Calves, and devised new Institutions, that by this Means he might strengthen his Dominion,
and

and prevent the Return of the Tribes of *Israel* to the House of *David*, which he feared might be occasion'd by their Resort to the Temple at *Jerusalem* to offer Sacrifice, especially on the three solemn Feasts. * And the same State-Maxims prevailed with all his Successors 'till the Captivity, to tread in the same Steps. But *Judab* (i. e. the Governors of the two Tribes, for GOD chose *Judah* to be the Ruler, 1 Chron. 28. 4.) yet ruled with GOD, because in *Judab* remained the true and lawful Succession of Princes in the House of *David*, chosen and approved of GOD, and because in *Judab* the Kingdom remained united with the true and lawful Priesthood, appointed and settled by GOD in the House of *Aaron*. So that GOD himself ruled by his own Institutions in the Kingdom of *Judab*: And especially *Judab* might be said to rule with GOD, when the Princes and Governors of *Judab* took Care to administer the political Affairs of the Kingdom, and to order Matters of Religion in it according to the righteous Laws and Ordinances of GOD their supream King.

If it be said, That this same Prophet gives a very different Character of the Princes of *Judab*, representing them as guilty of great Irregularities (for which GOD had a Controversy with them) in several Passages of his Prophecy, particularly, Chap. 5. 10 *The Princes of Judab were like Men that remove the Bounds* ; either by introducing Corruption into GOD's Worship, by their impious Examples and Decrees, and so encroaching on GOD's Rights, and removing the Bounds of Religion, or by invading the Rights and Properties

* 1 Kings 12. 26, 27, 28.

of the Subjects, and so removing the Bounds of Justice and Equity; *therefore*, it follows, *I will pour out my Wrath upon them like Water.* How then is this consistent with their ruling with GOD?

To solve this, we must recollect what has been observed concerning the Date of this Prophecy, which was given forth, not all at once, but in the several Reigns of the Kings of *Judab*, in the Days of *Uzziab*, *Jotham*, *Abaz*, and *Hezekiab*. Whence it appears, That what the holy Prophet has left on Record, was but a brief Summary of those Things that were more largely delivered in the successive Reigns of so many Kings, and that as he lived and prophecy'd in the Reign of one of the worst of them, *viz. Abaz*, to the Character of whose Reign the worst Things here charg'd on the Princes of *Judab*, might well agree; so did he also continue in the Discharge of the prophetic Office, in the Reign of one of the best, his Son and Successor, *Hezekiab*; to whose religious and prosperous Reign, the Character exhibited in the Text did undoubtedly belong. Thus *Grotius* understands it to be a Description of the Times of *Hezekiab*, who restored the true Worship of GOD in *Judab*, when Corruption in Worship and Manners did exceedingly prevail in the ten Tribes.

2. The other Instance of their Integrity was, That they continued *faithful with the Saints*: Which is to be understood of the whole Kingdom of *Judab* in general, including both Prince and People, as the *Antithesis* betwixt this, and the former Branch of the Verse, requires. This is the Praise of *Judab*, That when his Brethren of the House of *Israel*, apostatiz'd to Idolatry and false Worship, he was faithful with the *Most-Holy*, according

cording to the marginal Version, that is, *with GOD*; which denotes his faithful and constant adherence to the Worship of God; or, *with the Saints*, as the Text renders the Word in its most proper & usual Signification. He was faithful in the Service of God in Communion with all the Saints. By the *Saints* may be meant either the godly Patriarchs, and Predecessors of the Jewish Church, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses* and the succeeding Prophets, by whom God revealed to them his Laws and Ordinances, and directed their Worship and Obedience to him: So to be *faithful with the Saints*, is to persevere in the Steps of their pious Ancestors, and faithfully to retain the true Religion in its Purity, as it was transmitted to them by their Hands. Or by *the Saints* may be meant the *Priests* and *Levites*, the Ministers of holy Things, who being consecrated to God, and his special Service, were in a peculiar manner dignified with the Title of *Saints*, or *holy Ones*, the High Priest, more eminently, *Aaron the Saint of the Lord*. ‡ And *Moses* in blessing the Tribes of *Levi*, he said, *Let thy Thummim, and thy Urim be with thy holy one*. * Thus *Judab* was *faithful with the Saints*, when *Hezekiah*, with his Princes and People join'd with the sacred Order the *Priests* of the Lord, in promoting the Worship of God, when they kept close to sacred Institutions, attending the Service of the Temple, perform'd by the *Priests* and *Levites*, according to God's Ordinance, whom *Jeroboam* and his Successors had cast off from executing the Priest's Office. † In this we find *Abijah* King of *Judab* glorying in his Speech to *Jeroboam*, and the Tribes of *Israel*, 2 Chron. 13. 9, 10. *But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him, and the Priests which minister unto the Lord*

‡ Psal. 106. 16. * Deut. 33. 8. † 2 Chron. 11. 14.

are the Sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their Business, &c. And this indeed serv'd to heighten the Commendation of *Judah*, that notwithstanding the Revolt and Degeneracy of his Brethren, and the ill Example of their idolatrous Worship, he stood firm in his Loyalty, & Fidelity to God in the Profession and Practice of the true Religion. *Judah yet ruleth with God, and is yet faithful &c.* But it shall suffice to have offer'd thus much in way of Explication.

Now tho' the State of the Jews under the old Testament, was properly a *Theocracy*, God himself being in a peculiar manner their King, having by various extraordinary Methods, form'd them a People for himself, took upon him, by the general Consent of that Nation, the Government over them; their Constitution both civil and ecclesiastical, was of his forming, the Laws by which their Common-Wealth was administred, as well as their religious Institutions were enacted by his immediate Authority; their Magistrates and Rulers were of his more immediate and peculiar Designation, authorized and furnish'd by him with Powers for the execution of their Office, as his Deputies on Earth, ‡ who were also favour'd with frequent
particular

‡ For which Reason I humbly conceive that the glorious Title of *Gods* in Scripture is attributed, if not appropriated only to the Magistrates of the Israelitish Nation, as they were in a peculiar Manner the Delagates, or Lieutenants of the God of Israel on Earth, impower'd by a special Commission from him to execute his Laws; and especially as they were in that Capacity Types of the Messiah, who is that in Truth, which they were in Type, *God over all blest for ever*. To which purpose the Words of our Saviour are remarkable, who in quoting that Passage of the Psalmist, Psal. 82. 6. *I have said ye are Gods &c.* from thence justifying his own Claim to the Title of *the Son of God* against the cavils of the Jews, thus
argues

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particular Messages sent them by Angels from Heaven, and holy Prophets inspired thence, for Re-
proof, Warning, Counsel and Direction, as Occa-
sion required ; on which Accounts the Jewish
Magistrates might be said to *rule with God &c.* in
a Manner peculiar to that distinguished Nation :
Nevertheless the Words in their general Meaning,
and main Intention (setting aside what was pecu-
liar to the Jewish State, which was wholly extra-
ordinary) may be well accommodated to a christian
State and Government. And in this View I pro-
pose to consider them, and the Subject of my in-
tended Discourse from them, I shall offer to you
in this general Observation, *viz.*

D O C T R I N E.

*That as it is unquestionably the Duty, so it will
be highly for the Interest and Reputation, both
of Rulers and People professing the true Religion,
especially in Times of Degeneracy, to rule with
GOD, and to be faithful with the Saints.*

I shall endeavour to speak in order of these two
Branches (into which the Subject naturally re-
solves itself.) *First, Of Ruling with God. Secondly,*

argues, Joh. 10. 36. *If he called them Gods unto whom the
Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken ; say ye
of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the World,
thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God ? Those
Words, and the Scriptures cannot be broken, plainly shew, that
the Prophet's Words were spoken of the Jewish Magistrates,
with a typical Reference to Christ (in which Respect they have
the Nature of Prophecys, and must be fulfilled) and were
verified and fulfilled in him, who (being God, not only by
Office, but by Nature (as the Anitype always carries in it the
Truth and Reality of what was but shadow'd in the Type) and
therefore equal to his Charge) is appointed by the Father, his
high Commissioner to the Children of Men.*

Of

Of being faithful with the Saints. The former Branch principally concerns the Rulers of a professing People. The latter, the Body of a People, as well as their Rulers. Accordingly,

I. I shall endeavour to shew, when the Rulers of a professing People may be said to *rule with GOD*, and how much it will be for their Honour and Advantage so to do : For *ruling with GOD* speaks both the *Duty* and *Dignity* of Rulers.

1. As it speaks their *Duty*, the Enquiry shall be, When may Rulers or Magistrates be said to rule with GOD? To this I shall answer as briefly as I can, in the following Particulars,

1. When they make *the Glory of GOD*, and *the Good of their People*, the great Ends of their Government, and pursue these in all their Acts and Administrations. These are the proper Ends of the Institution of Government among Men. All civil Power and Authority being *of GOD*, according to the Apostle, * must be improved for him; for whatever is *of him* as the first Cause, must be *to him*, to his Glory and Honour, as the last End.† The next End in Subordination and Subserviency to this, is the Good of their People : Magistracy being in the original Institution of it, design'd for the maintaining and promoting the good Order, Peace, and Welfare of the several Societies of Men. He is (saith the Apostle, speaking of the Magistrate) *the Minister of GOD to thee for Good*.‡ He is so, by the Design of his Institution, being ordain'd of GOD, to take Care of the publick Good, in which every Man's particular Welfare

* Rom. 13. 1. † Rom. 11. 36. ‡ Rom. 13. 4.

is involv'd. And these are the Ends of the divine Government: The supream Lord and Ruler of Heaven and Earth, hath a constant and inviolable Regard to his own Glory, and the Good of his Creatures, in all his Administrations. 'Tis his Prerogative to rule for his own End. This Right incontestably belongs to him, who being an independant Sovereign, has none above him to give him the Charge of the World, or take an Account of his Administration: and as he is a Being most excellent, infinitely and invariably perfect, can have no other Designs but what are great, and wise, and good, becoming himself; and being the universal first Cause, must needs have an unalienable Dominion over the Creatures, and a Right to order and govern all for his own Glory. And this his Right is confess'd and proclaim'd in the Adorations of the heavenly Church; the twenty four Elders casting *their Crowns before the Throne*, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, Honour, and Power, for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure, or thy Will, they are and were created.* ‡ And next to his own Glory, he designs the Good of his Creatures; yea, the one is inseparably connected with and involved in the other; for hence arises his Glory and Praise from all his Works, even because *he is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works.* || The blessed GOD being from Eternity self-sufficient, above all possible Want, and being immutably Good, could have no other End or Motive, conceivable to us, to create and govern such a World as this, but to display his Bounty, Wisdom, Allsufficiency, Justice and Mercy, in the Eyes of admiring Intelligencies; diffusing his Benignity to all Parts

‡ Rev 4. 11. || Psal. 145. 9, 10.

of the Creation, and disposing all Things for the Good of the Universe.

The whole World is his Family, which as the universal Parent, he precides over, sustains, and provides for, with a paternal Bounty, Wisdom, and Care; exhibiting the Proofs of his Being, and governing Providence, in Instances of Kindness, even to the heathen World; ‡ and to the Evil and Unthankful, || but he hath peculiar Designs of Good to his own People and Children, (the special Favourites of Heaven) in conducting and disposing the Affairs of the World, as the holy Scriptures abundantly testify. † Such being the Ends of the divine Government, earthly Magistrates may be said to rule with him, when they harmonize with the supream Ruler, in these great Ends of his Glory and the Good of Men; when they make it their Aim, in all the Acts of their Government, to approve themselves to him, and to promote the Interests of his Glory in their whole Jurisdiction; as those that are commission'd by him, dependant on him, and accountable to him, and when they concur with him in all the great Designs of his Mercy and Good Will to Mankind, seeking the Welfare of their People. *

To this End Rulers ought to be Men of public generous Spirits, not seeking their own Honour, or the agrandizing or enriching themselves and their Families; for thus they will pervert the Design of their Office, and abuse the Trust devolv'd on them, but aiming at the publick Weal in all their Counsels, Enterprizes, and Actions : The

‡ Acts 14. 17. || Luk. 6. 35. † See 2 Chron 16. 9. Psal. 33. 18. and 73. 1. Itai 43. 4. Rom. 8. 28. Eph. 1. 22. 2 Cor. 4. 15. * Esth. 10. 3.

Motto of that heathen Roman Emperor, *Non mihi sed Populo*, well becomes a christian Magistrate, he must not think himself advanc'd to that high Dignity for his own Interest, but for that of the Publick. For this Reason *Jehro* advised *Moses* in the Choice of Magistrates, to have a particular Regard to this Qualification among others, that they should be *Men — bating Covetousness*. * This Selfishness and Contractedness of Spirit very ill becomes a Man in a private Capacity, since Nature itself teaches, that no Man is born for himself alone ; the great Author of our Beings having given us, in the very Frame and Constitution of our Natures, a Capacity for social Converse and mutual Assistance, has thereby laid an Obligation upon us, to seek each one another's Welfare ; and Christianity enforces this Dictate of Nature, by recommending a generous Charity as the peculiar Characteristick of its Votaries ; a Charity whose Property it is not to seek her own Things. † However such Self-seeking is more pardonable in private Persons, than in those that are advanc'd to a publick Station, and have a publick Trust committed to them, which adds to the Obligations of Nature and Christianity, to intend and pursue the publick Welfare. 'Twill therefore be a laudable Ambition in Rulers to approve themselves Fathers and Benefactors of their Country, laying aside all such private Views, as interfere with the common Good, which their Office binds them to endeavour the Advancement of, to their Power, to mend what is amiss among their People, to defend their Rights and Properties, and promote their true Interest and Prosperity, and especially to seek the Good of the Church of GOD under

* Exod. 18. 21. † 1 Cor. 13. 5.

their Dominion. Thus while they answer the Ends of Government, and conspire with the supreme Ruler, in his wise and good Designs, they may be truly said to rule with him.

2. When they seek the divine Direction and govern themselves by the Rules of GOD's Word in the Exercise of their Authority. A Person or People is said in Scripture to *be with GOD* while they *seek him*. * And then may the Rulers of a People be said to rule with GOD, when they are much with him in Prayer, not only on their own Account in common with all devout Christians, but on the publick Account, seeking the divine Guidance and Blessing on their Counsels and Administrations; as those that acknowledge and firmly believe the Superintendency of a divine Providence over humane Affairs; and that the good or ill Success of all their Enterprizes depends entirely on its Smiles or Frowns. The Weight of Government and Cares of the Publick that lie upon them, call for the united Prayers of their People. And all pious Christians will think it their Duty, as they are bound by the Rules of the Gospel, to be often & earnestly addressing Heaven on their Behalf, that they may be replenish'd with a Spirit of Wisdom and Counsel, and mightily assisted and succeeded in the Conduct of publick Affairs. Much less will pious Rulers, sensible of their Dependence on GOD, be wanting in this Duty, in which themselves are so immediately concern'd, and which is so necessary to engage the Divine Presence with them, and to bring down a Divine Blessing on their Government, and on the People under their Care, for whom they should be compassionate Intercessors.

* 2 Chron. 15. 2.

Such were *Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, David, Jehosaphat and Hezekiah*, and other pious Princes of *Judah*, who are set forth as glorious Examples to all Rulers who have the Welfare of their People on their Hearts. And the Prayers of pious Rulers have a mighty Power with God, to procure publick Blessings: And when they spirited like *Moses stand in the Breach*, to avert the Divine Wrath, God's Hands seem ty'd up by their Intercession, from executing just Vengeance on a provoking People, as his Words to *Moses* to divert him from pleading for sinful Israel, *Let me alone*, * seem to import. When Rulers do thus approve themselves Men of Prayer, and Intercessors for the Publick, then do they Rule with God in the best Manner, as those that have a powerful Interest in him, yea, as *Princes with God*.

And to maintain this Character of their Government, they are obliged not only to seek the divine Direction and Blessing, but also to endeavour Conformity to the Rules of Religion, the Rules of God's holy Word in the Exercise of their Authority: to take the Will of GOD for their Rule, and govern themselves in all their Counsels, and Actions, by those Principles of Justice, and Integrity, Wisdom and Prudence, Meekness, and B benignity, which the Law of Nature, and especially the holy Scriptures recommend, and require in Rulers. The Kings of Israel were commanded by GOD to *write a Copy of the Law*, and to *read therein* all the Days of their Lives, that they might *learn to fear the Lord their GOD, and to keep all the Words of his Law*. ‡ Which Precept (tho' it mayn't be supposed binding in the Letter of it to

* Exod. 32. 10. ‡ Deut. 17. 18, 19.

Christian Magistrates, yet) carries this Instruction in it to all Christian Kings, and subordinate Rulers, that they ought to be very conversant with the sacred Writings, and well acquainted with the Will of GOD therein revealed, for the ordering aright their Conduct in those high Stations and Employments they are placed in. And the Rules and Maxims of Religion steadily pursued by those that are employed in a publick Trust, however repugnant these may be to the Maxims of worldly Policy, which are calculated to serve some seperate Interest, yet will ever be found most conducive to the right Ends of Government, in the Advancement of GOD's Glory and the Welfare of the Publick.

3 When they act under the realizing Views of the Divine Omniscience, and the Account they must render of their Administrations to the supream Judge. To be *with God* in the Stile of Scripture, sometimes signifies to be under actual Apprehensions of the Majesty, Presence, and Inspection of God. Thus the devout Psalmist, having been contemplating the divine Omniscience, and Omnipresence, expresses the constant Sense he had of the Eye of God upon him in these Words, *When I awake, I am still with thee.* * And this is necessary to that Part of the Rulers Character laid down in sacred Writ, *Ruling in the fear of God.* † --- They must transact all the Affairs of Government and Judgment, as those that know they have a GOD of infinite Knowledge, and impartial Justice, always present with them, to oversee, and review, all their Counsels, Debates, Sentences, and Decrees; for he *standeth in the*

* Psa. 139. 18. † 2 Sam 23 3.

Congregation of the Mighty. ‡ He presides in all humane Courts, whether of Jurisdiction or Judicature, as supream Judge of all the Rulers and Judges of the Earth, and very narrowly inspects their Principles, Aims and Designs, as well as overt Acts, in the Exercise of that Authority he hath committed to them, in order to a strict Reckoning with them. And Magistrates that behave themselves in their Posts, under the Influence of these Considerations, who always set God before them in a deep Sense and Reverence of his Authority, Presence, Inspection, and Justice, and are influenced by the Prospect of the Account they must give to Him of themselves and their Administration, unto a strict Care to approve themselves to him, and to keep in good Terms with their Judge, may undoubtedly be said to rule with him.

4. When they take a special Care of Religion among their People, and improve their Authority to uphold and promote it. Thus the reforming Kings, and Magistrates of *Judab* ruled with God, when they took Care by their Example and Authority to set forward the Worship of GOD, and true Religion in the Kingdom. GOD himself rules in a peculiar Manner, where true Religion flourishes and prevails. This is the special Kingdom of GOD in this World, as it stands in Opposition to the Kingdom of Sin and Satan. And it is the Christian Religion especially, as it was taught and established by the Son of GOD, which hath in great Part restored his Kingdom among Men, after it was almost banished out of the World. And 'tis the Advancement of this Kingdom, wherein his own Glory, and the Good of Mankind are

‡ Psa. 82. 1.

jointly concerned, which is the great Design of his providential Government of the World. Here he will Rule in the midst of his Enemies, and in spite of them; ‡ and will go on to make Overturnings in the Earth, till *the Kingdoms of this World become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.* * And it is the Wisdom and the Interest of earthly Magistrates, and Rulers, to *kiss the Son*, according to the Language of holy Scripture, † to profess Subjection, and pay Homage to the incarnate Redeemer, to devote themselves, and their Power and Authority to his Service. And when these *Shields of the Earth*, as they are called, || are consecrated to the *Lord Jesus*, to exalt Him in their Dominion, by affording Protection & Encouragement to his Religion and Servants; when they concur with the Design of the blessed GOD, by their Endeavours to advance the Kingdom of his Son, and to promote his pure and undefiled Religion, by shewing themselves the Patrons of it, and nursing Fathers to the Church of Christ, then do they in an eminent Manner rule with GOD and for him.

The secular Magistrate indeed may not use his Authority to impose Articles of Faith, or Modes of Worship, on the Consciences of the Subjects, or enforce these by civil Penalties; for the Consciences of Men are immediately subject to GOD, and acknowledge no Superiour but Him alone. It is a Branch of the royal Prerogative of the supreme King, which he will share with no Authority on Earth, to rule in the Conscience; his Image and Superscription it bears, and not *Cæsar's*. If the Magistrate's Sword could pierce and wound the Conscience, he might have a more justifiable

‡ Psal. 110. 2. * Rev. 11. 15. † Psal. 2. 11, 12. † Psal. 47. 9.
Pretension

Pretension to exercise a Jurisdiction over it ; but no Sword can reach this spiritual Faculty in Man but the Sword of the Spirit, the Sword that proceedeth out of the Mouth of him whose Name is the *Word of GOD*. Yea, it is the undoubted Interest of civil Magistrates to preserve the Rights of Conscience intire and inviolable among their People ; for when once their Consciences are vitiated and debauch'd (as most certainly they are) by forc'd Compliances with Impositions against their Light and Dictates, the sacred Ligaments of Society and Government are at once broken and dissolved ; no Promises, Covenants, or Oaths can be suppos'd to have any sure Hold upon them, who have broken loose from the natural Reverence of GOD in their own Consciences.

However, there is notwithstanding sufficient Room, & Scope for the Exercise of the Magistrates Authority in, and about Matters of Religion. The Morals of a People, that make up an essential Part of practical Religion, and which affect Society, are undoubtedly the Object of the Magistrates Inspection and Care, who is generally confess'd to be *Utriusq; Tabulæ Custos & Vindex* ; the Guardian of both Tables. Here, he beareth not the Sword in vain ; nor can he exercise too severe a Concern in this Matter : This is the great End of Magistracy, as the Apostle has declared, whether of *the King as Supream*, or of *Governors that are sent by him* ; they are ordained for *the Punishment of evil Doers*, and for *the Praise of them that do well* ‡ They are to be a Terror to Evil Doers by making severe Laws against Impiety and Vice, arm'd with such Penalties, as may

‡ 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14.

be effectual to curb in, and restrain the vicious Inclinations of Men ; and by a zealous Execution of them. The Magistrates Sword of Justice must like that set about Paradise, *turn every Way*, to Guard God's sacred Name, and Day, and the holy Things of his House, against open Prophanations of all Kinds ; and to correct and repress as much as in them lies, the Immoralities of the second Table, all Violence and Injustice, Pride, Luxury, Whoredom, Drunkenness, Lying, Slandering, and the like Enormities ; which no less violate the Peace, and Welfare of Societies, than the Rules of Religion. They have it also much in their Power to protect and encourage the Profession and Practice of true Religion, by countenancing the pious and faithful among their Subjects ; honouring them that fear the Lord, while a vile Person is contemned in their Eyes ; and advancing those of that Character to publick Posts in the Government, according to the Example of the royal Psalmist's Resolution, *† Mine Eyes shall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me : He that walketh in a perfect Way, he shall serve me.* More especially by affording all proper Encouragement to a learned, pious, and faithful Ministry, on which, as the Means GOD hath ordained and sanctified, true Religion depends : I mean not the Name only, but its Vitality, Power, and Influence on Men's Hearts and Lives. And also by supporting Schools of Learning for the Instruction of Youth, and forming their Minds betimes to Religion and Vertue ; which are highly necessary to these Ends ; because of most Parents want, either of Ability, Inclination, or Leisure to instruct their own Children, and without

†_Psalm. 101. 6.

which a People will soon degenerate into Barbarism and Irreligion.

In such Ways as these, and others that might be mention'd, the Magistrate's Authority may be well improved for the Advancement of Religion and the Kingdom of GOD; and if, as the wise Man observes, *Righteousness exalteth a Nation*, † tends to their Honour and Prosperity, and *Sin is a Reproach to any People*, tends to bring them low, and subject them to Poverty, Reproach and Misery, it is certainly the Magistrate's Duty, as he is ordained for the publick Good, and no less his Interest, to use his Power to encourage and promote Religion and Righteousness, and to suppress Vice and Wickedness. And those that act with Zeal and Faithfulness for these Ends of their Office, who rise up against the evil Doers, and stand up for GOD against the Workers of Iniquity, and employ their Authority for the Interest of his Kingdom, or moral Government over Men, may justly be said to rule with GOD, to rule according to his Heart.

5. When they study to exemplify, in their Administration, those Perfections of the supream Ruler, that are most eminently demonstrated in his Government of the World; particularly his Wisdom, Justice, and Mercy. These divine Properties shine with a peculiar Lustre in the Acts of his governing Providence over Mankind; in the Manifestation whereof he is greatly delighted and glorified, when, as he speaks by the Prophet, he is *known*, ador'd, and imitated, as a GOD that *exerciseth Loving-Kindness*, or Mercy, *Judgment*,

† Prov. 14. 34.

or Wisdom, Knowledge, and Discretion, *and Righteousness in the Earth.* ‡ This Earth is the Theatre on which those glorious rectoral Perfections of the supream Majesty, his Mercy, Wisdom, and Justice, are more admirably display'd, for ought we know, than on any other Part of the Creation ; for we know of no other rebel Creatures besides degenerate Mankind, whom the Great GOD has vouchsafed to take under his Government and Care, in order to their being reduced to their Allegiance and Happiness : And such a Race of revolted Creatures taken under the divine Management for such Purposes, must needs afford a large Scope for the Exercise and Manifestation of infinite Wisdom, and the admirable Temperature of Justice and Mercy in all his Dealings with them by a Mediator.

And earthly Rulers, who bear the Image of his Authority in their Office, and sustain the Character of his Vicegerents, are, as such, under peculiar Obligations to imitate the supream Governour in his moral Perfections, especially to endeavour a Resemblance of him in his Wisdom, Righteousness and Clemency, in the Exercise of their Authority, and then will they give the clearest Proof of their ruling with him. And such are the Qualifications of Rulers which the holy Scriptures most frequently recommend, and insist upon, as requisite to the faithful Discharge of their Office. I purpose not to insist here, but shall very briefly observe,

1. They must be Men of Wisdom, Understanding, and Discretion ; well acquainted with the

‡ Jer. 9. 24.

Rules and Methods of Government, and with the Manners, Customs, Tempers, and Interests of their People, and the Circumstances of their Affairs. They must excell in useful Knowledge, especially in such Kinds and Degrees as may give them a thorough Insight into their Office, in order to a regular and successful Management: They must be Persons of a solid Judgment and Tho't, Discerning and Penetration; capable of seeing with their own Eyes, that they may not be led blindfold by others: Such as *have Understanding of the Times*, like the Men of *Iffacbar*, to know *what* Israel ought to do; * and know the Things that belong to the Peace of their People, and study to promote the same by a prudent and dextrous Application of proper Means for that Purpose. This Qualification *Moses* directs to in the Choice of Rulers; *Take ye wise Men, and Understanding, and known among your Tribes.* †

2. They must be Men of strict and impartial Justice: for the GOD of *Israel* said--- *He that ruleth over Men, must be just.* ‡ And natural Reason readily subscribes to that divine Oracle, that such as are vested with Magistratical Authority over Men must be just, and neither do wrong themselves, nor suffer it to be done by others, and take Care that Justice may have its free Course in the common Wealth, by enacting righteous Laws and Rules of Government, and by a righteous and impartial Execution of them, always maintaining an unbrib'd and unbiassed Disposition to do Justice to all, without Respect of Persons, in Imitation of the supream Judge.

* 1 Chron. 12: 32. † Deut. 1. 13. ‡ 2 Sam. 23. 2.

3. Mercy and Clemency also must enter into their Character to temper the rigour of Justice. Magistrates must rule with Clemency. For as *the Throne is established by Righteousness*; so it is also *upholden by Mercy*, saith the same wise King. * And this is the peculiar Glory of the Divine Government. Now when these amiable divine Qualities, I have mentioned, do meet in Rulers, and are carried thro' their Administration, it is apparent, that God himself rules in, and by them, and they with him. I shall only add,

6 When they approve themselves Persons of strict Religion and Vertue. When all their other Accomplishments for Rule and Government, are crown'd with real and exemplary Piety. This alone, 'tis true, will not qualify a Man for Government, nor is every sincerely pious Man fit to be made a Magistrate; yet it will add a Lustre, and give Life to a Man's other intellectual and moral Endowments, and qualify him for ruling with GOD in the forementioned Respects, not only as a subservient Instrument of his Providence, as others may be, who are destitute of real Piety, but as one who is animated and conducted by a divine Spirit, impress'd with the Image of GOD, living in Communion with him, and devoted to his Service and Honour, and as such, more eminently (as it may be expected) assisted, owned, and blessed of GOD in his publick Station. This therefore is necessary to the more effectual reaching the Ends of Government in ruling with and for GOD, and for the Good of Men, that Magistrates, who stand in Places of Eminency among their People, should be Persons of conspicuous

* Prove 20. 28.

Piety and Devotion towards GOD, of Righteousness and Charity towards Men, and of exemplary Sobriety and Temperance ; for how unfit are they to Rule over others, who have not yet learnt to govern themselves, or to rule their own Appetites and Passions by the Laws of Reason and Religion ? How unfit are they to punish Vice and Irreligion in others, who cherish it in themselves, whose Examples will have a greater Influence to corrupt the Morals of their People, than the Punishments they inflict, to correct and reform them ? But when Rulers distinguish themselves by real personal Vertue and Piety, they will not then *bear the Sword in vain*, but may with greater Decency and Authority, with greater Courage, Confidence, and hope of Success, exert it for the Correction and Punishment of Vice and Prophaness, and for promoting the Reformation of Manners. Thus much may be signified by the Phrase of *ruling with GOD*, as it speaks the Duty of Rulers. I come now

2. To consider it as it speaks their *Dignity, Honour, and Advantage*. The Office and Authority of Rulers among Men, in it self consider'd, is high and honourable ; but when they that rule others do serve the Great GOD with their Authority, in so doing (it may be truly said, without a Paradox) they *rule with him*, in the loftiest Sense of the Phrase, and share in a subordinate Degree, some of the Dignity and Honour of the supream Ruler, and stand high in his Favour, which is the greatest Honour that mortal Men are capable of. Two Things seem plainly implied in it, which conduce much to the Honour and Interest of Rulers.

1 That GOD will honour them with his special Presence and Favour. Those that rule with
GOD,

GOD, have GOD ruling with them. Their having the Presence of GOD with them in the Exercise of Government, being the necessary Import and Result of their ruling with him. And this Connection (in the Reason of the Thing) between their Duty and Privilege, is confirm'd by the divine Promise. *The Lord is with you, while you are with him.* * He is with them to direct and assist them in the difficult and important Affairs of Government, to prosper and succeed their Counsels and Enterprizes, to own and bless them with his peculiar Favours and Smiles. It is this Presence of GOD with them that truly magnifys them, and exalts their Character, and makes their Authority venerable, and commands Respect and Reverence from all about them: As *Joshua was magnified in the Sight of all Israel*, when it appear'd that GOD was *with him*, as he was *with Moses*. ‡ Those that honour GOD in their publick Stations by improving their Authority for the Interests of his Glory, he will thus honour by the distinguishing Tokens of his Presence. And

2. Their Authority is, hereby, best established and secured. They that rule with GOD, shall rule, i. e. they shall be confirm'd and prosper'd in the Exercise of their Authority, being supported by the Power and Presence of the Almighty: They shall have the Dominion, according to GOD's Promise to his People *Israel* when they kept close to him, *they shall be above only, and shall not be beneath* || The improving their Power for the Defence & Maintenance of the Cause of GOD, Religion and Vertue, is the most effectual Course they can take for the strengthening their own Do-

* 2 Chron. 15. 2. ‡ Josh 3 7. || Deut. 28. 13.

minion ;

minion ; for the Cause of GOD has always the greatest Strength on its Side, and shall surely prevail at last. And their giving Encouragement and Protection to Religion, and religious People, (which is one eminent Instance of their ruling with GOD) will be found the best Support of their own Interest, according to that of the Prophet *Zecbariah*, *The Governors of Judah shall say in their Hearts, the Inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my Strength, in the Lord of Hosts, their GOD.* Chap. 12. 5. which as it seems to relate to the Times of the Gospel, may be thus paraphras'd in the Language of the new Testament ; *The Magistrates of a Christian People, shall account the true Members of the Church of Christ, the Citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, pious and good Men, the Strength of their Country, and of their Government, because of their Relation to, and Interest in GOD, the Lord of Hosts.* And happy are those Rulers, and that People, who can thus discern wherein their true Interest lies.

The Authority of Rulers thus improved for the Honour of GOD, and the publick Good, can seldom fail of being establish'd in the Hearts of a willing People. This will dispose them to pay all due Subjection, Honour, and Tribute to them, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake, and not only so, but from Interest, Inclination, and Choice. This will make them the Joy of their Subjects, and the Envy and Terror of their Enemies ; for saith *Solomon*, *When the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoyce.* ‡ All good People will rejoyce, as they have Reason ; and those of another Character, will yet be pleased to see Men of approved Integrity, advanc'd to Posts in the

‡ Prov. 29. 2.

Government, and the Administration put into good and faithful Hands. They were the Enemies and Ill-wishers of the Jewish State, whom it grieved exceedingly, *that there was come a Man to seek the Welfare of the Children of Israel.* * This will conciliate Esteem and Veneration in all well-disposed Minds, more than all their Titles of Honour, rich Revenues, and pompous Ensigns of Authority, and entail a lasting Renown on their Memories with Posterity. Moreover, This above all Things, will make them easy in their Posts, as the Consciousness of their Integrity will furnish them with a sure Store of Confidence, that they may venture themselves open to the Light, and need not fear the exactest Scrutiny and Survey of their Conduct, and will raise them above those troublesome Suspicions, and Jealousies of a Discovery, which the dark Designs, and corrupt Views of carnal Politicians perpetually expose them to. But above all this, will make them easy under the Prospect of their final Account to the Judge of all, and administer Peace and Comfort in a dying Hour, when having ruled with GOD as *Hezekiah* did, they may reflect with him, and say, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is Good in thy Sight.* † To them Death will be Gain, which, tho' it divests them of their earthly Authority, will yet advance them to the high Honour and Dignity of reigning with Christ, and his Saints, in the endless Glory of the heavenly World.

I come now to speak in a few Words to the second Branch of the Subject.

* Neh. 2. 10. † Isai 58. 13.

II. It will be highly for the Interest and Reputation both of Rulers and People professing Religion, to abide *faithful with the Saints*, especially in Times of Degeneracy.

I must not enlarge here as the Importance of the Subject might seem to require, but shall confine my self to a few Hints under these Heads, *First*, What is it to be *faithful with the Saints*? *Secondly*, When may this Character be applied to a People in General? *Thirdly*, The Connection between *ruling with GOD*, and being *faithful with the Saints*. And *Fourthly*, How much it will be for the Interest and Reputation of a professing People, especially in Times of Degeneracy, to abide *faithful with the Saints*.

First, I am to shew what it is to be *faithful with the Saints*. Faithfulness supposes a *Trust* committed to us, or an *Engagement* we take on ourselves: And both these Ways a professing People are under Obligations to Faithfulness. In coming into Covenant Relation to GOD, they take upon them solemn Engagements to Obedience; they *avouch the Lord to be their GOD, to walk in his Ways, to keep his Statutes and Commandments*, as he *avoucheth them to be his People*. * They have also a *Trust* committed to them. They are intrusted with the Religion GOD has instituted and revealed, not only to be observ'd in their own Practice, but to be carefully preserv'd and convey'd down in its Purity to the next Generation. Hence we read of the *Faith delivered to the Saints*; *Oracles of GOD committed*; *Ordinances and Commandments deliver'd* to a professing People, to be

* Deut. 26. 17, 18.

kept without Spot, unrebukable thro' all Generations, 'till the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ‡ And tho' all that enter into Covenant Relation to GOD are Saints by Profession, visible Saints, † yet those only are Saints indeed, who are faithful to GOD : and all real Saints are, and will be faithful to the Trust GOD has committed to them, and to their Engagements to him, according to the Measure of Grace they have receiv'd. Hence the *Saints* and *Faithful* are mention'd in Scripture as convertible Terms. * And so we may be said to be faithful with the Saints in these two or three Respects, *Viz.*

1. When we receive, and faithfully and inviolably retain the true Religion, Faith, and Worship, as it is delivered to us in the inspired Writings of holy Men of GOD, the Prophets and Apostles. As the Jewish Church was faithful with the Saints in adhering to the Religion transmitted to them by their pious Ancestors, and to the Prescriptions and Ordinances of the Law of *Moses* ; so may Christians, in a special Manner, be said to be, when they adhere faithfully to the Doctrines and Institutions of the new Testament, deliver'd to them in the sacred Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. *This is the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*, and which all the Saints have been most careful to preserve, not only for their own Use and Benefit, but as a sacred Depositum to be handed down to succeeding Ages. And this will be the best Evidence to Ministers and Churches at this Day, of their being truly apostolical, the true and approv'd Successors of the Apostles, without which, all other Reasons and Pleas

‡ Jude 3. Rom. 3. 2. 1 Cor. 11. 2. 23. 2 Pet. 2. 21.
 † 1 Tim. 6. 14. ‡ Psal. 50. 5. * Eph. 1. 1. Col. 1. 2.

to support such a Claim, will plainly appear far fetch'd and inconclusive ; This, I say, will be the only sure Evidence, namely, Their retaining the true Faith, the true Worship, and the true Piety which the Apostles taught and recommended by their Preaching and Example, and have transmitted to us in their Writings.

2. When we carefully imitate the Saints that have gone before us in their Faith and Piety ; not only in the Profession of the true Religion, but in the Vertues of an holy Life. When we follow the Foot-steps of the Flock of Christ, and tread in the Steps of good Men, whether of such as have been of our special Acquaintance, or our pious Fore-fathers, who were shining Patterns of Faith, Zeal, Self-denial, Charity, Humility, and other Christian Vertues ; or of the Saints in former Ages, whose pious Example is left on Record for our Imitation ; as we are required to walk in the Steps of faithful *Abraham*, and to be *Followers of those who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises*. ‡ This will be the surest Proof of our Faithfulness with the Saints, as it evidences our Fellowship with them in the same Spirit.

3. When we faithfully adhere to the Communion of living Saints, especially those of the sacred Order, and under the Conduct of a pious and faithful Ministry, observe all the Ordinances and Commandments of GOD our Saviour, in particular Church Fellowship, and duely attend the Duties that such a Relation binds us to ; approving our Faithfulness to GOD in keeping the Charge of his Covenant, in the several Instances I have men-

‡ Rom. 4. 12. Heb. 6. 12.

tion'd; and maintaining a firm Constancy in the Profession of the Truth, and in the Duties of our holy Profession, whatever Temptations surround us to move us from our own Stedfastness. These, I take to be the principal Things intended by being *faithful with the Saints*.

Secondly, When may this Character be applied to a People in general? Particular Persons may be found faithful to GOD in Times of general Apostacy and prevailing Corruption; but when may it be said of a People in general, as here, they are *faithful with the Saints*?

To this I answer in a Word, When not only an outward Face of Religion, or Form of Godliness, is kept up by a professing People, but the Power and Practice of Piety, Righteousness, and Holiness is found in a prevailing Degree among them; when the Body of Professors keep close to GOD's Institutions, tho' some, yea many Hypocrites and wicked People may be intermix'd with them, which must be expected in the purest Communities, 'till the great Day of Separation; yet when Religion has the visible Ascendant, and no open Iniquity or Impiety is tolerated, when those that bear Authority in Families, Churches, or in the State, faithfully exert their Endeavours to suppress Sin, and promote Religion and Vertue: When this is the Case of a People in general, tho' there may be yet much amiss in them (as there was in *Hezekiah's* Time) that calls for Reformation, yet according to the Mitigations and Abate-ments the Mercies of GOD are wont to allow, they may be denominated a religious faithful People.

So I proceed

Thirdly, To shew the Connection between *Ruling with GOD*, and being *faithful with the Saints*. And this appears necessary, with Respect to the Persons of Rulers, and the People under their Charge.

1. With respect to the Persons of Rulers, it is evidently suppos'd in their *ruling with GOD*, that they are also faithful with the Saints; that they profess and practice the true Faith and Religion in common with all the Saints, and use their Power to encourage, protect, and promote it, as I have shewed already. And on the other Hand, supposing Power and Dominion given to the Saints of the Most High, or, which is the same Thing, to those that are faithful in the Communion of Saints, it is quite out of Character for them to use their Authority for any other Ends than those of GOD's Glory, the Interest of Religion, and the Good of their People; and these are inseparably link'd together.

2. With respect to the People under their Charge, we may observe, That a People's Reputation for Religion and Virtue will very much follow the Character of their Rulers. If they are vicious and corrupt, no Wonder Iniquity abounds in a Land, and Corruption of Manners every where prevails; when those that shou'd be a Terror to evil Works and evil Workers, do rather countenance and promote them: When vile Men are exalted to Places of Power and Trust, no other can be expected but that the Wicked will walk on every Side. * On the contrary, when Rulers

* Psal. 12. 8.

are pious and faithful, and employ their Power on GOD's Side, for the Advancement of pure Religion, their Example and Authority will go far to engage a People to Faithfulness in their Duty to GOD in the observance of his Ordinances, and will have a marvellous Influence on their Religion and Morals.

And if we look over the History of the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, we shall find this Observation commonly verified, That as their Rulers were well, or ill-affected to Religion, and the Worship of GOD, such were for the most Part the Body of the People, who generally follow'd their Leaders. When those that are in Authority are endow'd with Grace and Wisdom from above, and go before their People in an Example of Piety, and use their Authority for its right Ends, in the Suppressi-
on of Vice, and Reformation of Manners, it may reasonably be hop'd that the People under their Charge, will *lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness & Honesty.* ‡ They have it much in their Power by the Sword of Justice that is put into their Hands to restrain and suppress the open Practice of every Thing that is impious and vicious, that the criminal Actors of it shall be forc'd to lurk in Corners, and the Guilt lye on themselves alone, and not on the Publick. And from the publick Countenance given to Religion, all that look for Preferment in the State, will readily apprehend what must be the necessary Qualification. And their pious Example in these honourable Stations will have an attractive and engaging Influence on all about them, and serve to bring Vice and vicious Persons into Contempt, and

‡ 1 Tim. 2. 2.

Religion and Virtue into Reputation, and so take off much of the Prejudice that lies on the carnal Hearts of Men against it. We all know what an happy Influence that zealous Resolution of *Jeshua* had on the Congregation of *Israel*, when he so bravely declar'd to them, that tho' every Man of *Israel* should forsake GOD and his Service, *as for me and my House, we will serve the Lord*; upon which all the Motives of Honour and Conscience conspir'd to bring them on to join with him in the same noble Resolution, *We also will serve the Lord, for he is our GOD.* * And they were as good as their Word, while this zealous Magistrate liv'd, *the People serv'd the Lord all the Days of Jeshua.* ‡ And thus may it be expected that a People will be found faithful with the Saints, when their Magistrates and Leaders rule with GOD.

Wherefore I add in the last Place,

Fourthly, That it will be highly for the Interest and Reputation of a professing People, especially in Times of Degeneracy, to abide *faithful with the Saints*. I need not insist here, the Evidences and Proofs of this are obvious to the least Reflection. Thus when good *Hezekiab*, (to whose Reign, I suppose the Prophet's Words to refer.) had purg'd out Corruptions of Worship, restor'd Religion to its Purity, the Kingdom of *Judab* began to lift up its Head, and recover its sinking Reputation, and GOD magnified him in the Sight of the Nations, and bless'd him with Success, Victory, Wealth, and Honour. Nothing can contribute more to the Reputation of a People, than their Fidelity to GOD in keeping his Covenant, and Command-

* *Josh.* 24. 15, 18. ‡ *Judg.* 2. 7.

ments. This will make them *big above all Nations in Praise, in Name, and in Honour*; * and procure them Esteem and Admiration among their Neighbours. So long as there remains in the Consciences of Men a Sense of the real Difference between moral Good and Evil, and a Conviction of the Wisdom and Excellency of Holiness and Virtue, and of the Turpitude of Vice, which is not wholly effaced in the most degenerate of Mankind; so long virtuous and religious People must be had in Honour and Esteem.

And when a People, a Church, or Community, preserve an uncorrupted Integrity, while other Nations, and Churches, fall away from the purity of Religion; this will add the Praise of Constancy to their other Vertues, and render them more bright and illustrious, and recommend them to the distinguishing Regard of Heaven. And whatever may be supposed, the true *Interest* of a People depends intirely upon this. Their most valuable spiritual and eternal Interests, are unquestionably secur'd hereby, and their temporal Happiness most effectually provided for; which indeed is the natural Result of those Duties GOD requires of a People, as link'd together in Society, Justice, Sobriety, Humility, Charity, Meekness, Frugality, and Diligence: these have a natural Influence on a People's Safety, Honour, and Prosperity. But besides this, the GOD of Heaven and Earth, will be faithful in keeping Mercy and Truth for them that are faithful and steadfast in his Covenant. GOD Almighty shall bless them, as he has promised, on whose Smiles their whole Felicity depends. When he giveth *Quietness*, none can make *Trouble*. † And when his Judgments are abroad

* Deut. 26 19. † Job 34 29.

in the Earth, they stand fairest for the distinguishing Care and Protection of Divine Providence and Grace; according to Christ's Promise to the Church of Philadelphia, *Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth.* * And under the Blessing of the Almighty thus engag'd, and his auspicious Influence, they may expect to be built up and prospered, and may promise themselves whatever may contribute to their temporal Peace and Prosperity, Wealth & Honour; or that the Effect thereof will be just and righteous Liberties, a regular and successive Administration, the flourishing of Learning and Arts, the prosperity of Trade, Husbandry, and Manufactures, and the Success of all the Works of their Hands. For tho' these Things are but additional to the main Blessings of the Covenant, yet are they commonly bestow'd as the Rewards of publick Vertue: For (as has been often, and I think justly observ'd) "tho' particular Persons are capable of future Rewards
" and Punishments, which are therefore most usually
" ly deferr'd to another Life, yet publick Societies,
" as such, are not; they will all be disbanded before
" the Great Day of Retribution: and therefore
" if they be rewarded, or punished at all, as
" Communities, or collective Bodies, (as it is
" highly congruous to the Wisdom and Justice of
" the divine Government they should) it must be
" in this Life, and accordingly they usually are
" either prosperous or miserable, as either Piety
" and Vertue, or Irreligion and Vice abound in
" them, and meet with publick Countenance and
" Encouragement."

* Rev. 3. 10.

Nevertheless, let it be also observ'd, that those particular Persons that abide faithful with GOD in the midst of a degenerate People, whether in an higher or lower Station, shall be honour'd with special Marks of divine Approbation : And tho' they may be trampled on, and despised by the ungodly Multitude, and tho' they may be involv'd in publick Judgments on a sinful People, yet their Constancy and Fidelity in the Cause of GOD and Religion will be had in great Reputation in Heaven, and they shall be safe in all their most valuable Interests, and a glorious Crown is reserv'd for them. *Be thou faithful unto Death, saith Christ, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. ‡* And saith he to the Church of Sardis, *Thou hast a few Names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.* In a Word, those that are faithful with the Saints shall have an happy Lot among them, and a better can never be desired by those that well understand what an Honour and Happiness it is to share in the Favours of God's peculiar People, to see, and enjoy the Good of his Chosen, to rejoyce with the Gladness of his Nation, and to glory with his Inheritance.

I come now to make some *Application* of what has been discours'd. And

First of all ; It might well deserve a serious Inquiry, Whether, or how far, the Character which hath been open'd, may be apply'd to the present Incumbents of this Land ? The Examination hereof, I shall leave to be pursued by all concerned, Both Rulers and People ; and shall only observe,

‡ Rev. 2. 10.

that as the first Settlement of this Country was enterpriz'd on a religious Account, so when it is consider'd what an uncommon Spirit of Zeal, and Self-denial animated our pious Fore-Fathers to engage in so hazardous and expensive an Undertaking, in transporting themselves and their Families into this remote Wilderness for the Sake of a purer Reformation, which they had long contended for in vain, especially for the Purity of Gospel Institutions, a pure scriptural Worship and Discipline, which, thro' the Iniquity of the Times, they were not allow'd the peaceable Enjoyment of in their native Land : And when it is consider'd, how much it was their Concern to lay Religion in the Foundation of their Settlement, and to erect Churches to our Lord Jesus according to Scripture Pattern, and so to set up his Kingdom in these Ends of the Earth, to assert and vindicate his sole Authority as King and Head of the Church, to Rule in it by his own Laws and Ordinances, that they might observe all, and only the Things that he has commanded, and not only enjoy for themselves, but transmit and secure to their Children and Posterity, the Covenant Enjoyment of all the Ordinances and precious Things of his Kingdom, and so to order their civil Constitution and Administration, as might best serve the Purposes of Religion and Reformation : And what eminent Examples they generally were of true practical Religion, of Christian Piety, Charity, Justice, Self-denial, and Sobriety : When these Things, I say, are considered, little doubt remains, but that it might be justly and truly said of them that they *ruled with GOD, and were faithful with his Saints.* And GOD was signally present with them, and own'd them by the remarkable Appearances of his Providence for them, in protecting and prospering them. But alas ! how visible and sad are

our Degeneracies at this Day ? We have been going away from GOD's Ordinances from the Days of our Fathers, and have not kept them. The Complaint began in their Day, and the Grounds of it have been increasing since. I am loth to take up the Lamentation of the Prophet, and say, *How is the faithful City become an Harlot ?* Isai. I 21. I wou'd hope Things are not yet come to this pass among us : Nay, I am perswaded, that notwithstanding our Degeneracies, there is yet, to the Praise of divine Grace, a very considerable Number, among all Ranks, of serious devout Christians, who are Examples of undissembled Piety ; and doubt not but the Son of GOD, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who still walks in the midst of his Golden Candle-sticks, yet observes many Things commendable in these Churches, which he beholds from Heaven with a well pleased Eye. But at the same Time we may as little doubt, that he has Cause enough to say to the *New England Churches*, as he did to the Church of *Ephesus*, *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first Love.* The former Strictness in Religion, that Brotherly-Love, that Publick Spirit, and Zeal for the Order and Ordinances of the Gospel, which was so much the Glory of our Fathers, is very much abated, yea disrelished by too many : and a Spirit of Licentiousness, and Neutrality in Religion, of Uncharitableness and Contention, Pride & Sensuality, and other corrupt Manners and Practices of a World that lies in Wickedness, so opposite to the Ways of GOD's People, do exceedingly prevail in the midst of us.

We have, its true, the outward Symbols of true Christianity among us ; the Oracles of GOD, committed to us, an instituted Ministry, Ordinations to that sacred Office, ordinarily managed with
great

great Solemnity, Gospel-Truths in their Purity generally taught in our Churches, & solemn Covenantings with GOD : We have our Sabbaths, our Sacraments, and religious Assemblies, Days of Fasting, and Thanksgiving : Yet all this amounts to no more than a Form of Godliness, while in the mean Time, that real vital Piety, which should diffuse a Life and Beauty into this external Face of Religion, is greatly under Decays, as it has been long observed and lamented by the pious and faithful in our Israel. And tho' we appear together on these Anniversaries, from all Quarters of the Land, with the Heads of our People, to pay our religious Acknowledgments to the GOD of our Fathers, and our GOD, and to inquire in his Temple, and to usher in our civil Transactions with solemn Prayer, and consult the Oracles of GOD, and so far we are doubtless in the Way of our Duty ; yet if after all we will not be guided by this Counsel, what do we more than the *Jews* in their corrupt and degenerate Times ? *They seek me daily, saith God by the Prophet, and delight to know my Ways, as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinances of their GOD, they ask of me the Ordinance of Justice, &c.* When at the same Time, GOD bids his Prophet, *Cry aloud, & spare not, lift up his Voice like a Trumpet, and shew his People their Transgressions, and the House of Jacob their Sins.* ‡ Our religious Formalities without the Life and Power of Religion, instead of recommending us to the Favour of GOD, will but add new Matter of Provocation to him.

Moreover, the Divine Rebukes on the Land in a variety of judicial Dispensations, tho' intermixt

* Isai. 58. 1, 2.

with abundance of Mercy, are a plain Intimation that GOD has a Controversy with us for our Backslidings, and Unfaithfulness in his Covenant. For all his Judgments on a professing People are design'd to *avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant*. But that which is the most lamentable Symptom of all is our Security under the Rebukes of Heaven, and Insensibleness of the Anger of GOD manifested therein against us, (while we are apt to terminate our Views and Complaints on second Causes of our Troubles and Grievances) and (as the Consequence thereof) our Incurribleness, and walking contrary to GOD in the Ways of his Judgments, and neglecting a practical Compliance with the Design of them, which is to humble and reform us. And if we go on in our Departures from GOD, without being reclaim'd by more gentle Corrections, we may justly fear that the Wrath of GOD which has been so long impending over us, will break out upon us in more awful and exemplary Instances of Severity, than have been yet seen, or known. For what else can be expected according to GOD's ordinary Methods, as the Consequence of the Apostacies of a People so highly favour'd on religious Accounts as we have been? The Consideration whereof should not indeed leave us dispirited, or to conclude there is no Hope; No, there is no Reason for that; if we would but hearken to, and be ruled by GOD's Counsel, we might yet be an happy People; but it should rather call up, and animate our Zeal and Resolution to attempt a Reformation, that we may retrieve, if possible, this glorious Character in whatever Instances, or Degrees, we may be suppos'd to have fallen short of it; That it may still be said that *New England*, yet *ruleth with GOD*, and is *faithful with the Saints*. And

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This is that which in the *second Place*, I crave Leave to press upon all in their several Stations and Capacities, with the most earnest Solicitude and Concern to aspire after, as that which is most certainly our greatest Interest and Glory, agreeably to what has been discours'd.

Which may

First, Be improved for Direction to the *honourable and worthy Persons*, in whom the Election of *His Majesty's Council* for this Province is vested by the *Royal Charter*; which is the Business of this Day.

You have been often minded, on such Occasions as this, of the weighty Trust that is committed to you by GOD, your KING, and Country, and of which you must give an Account. Remember you stand, and act in this Affair, in a publick Capacity; wherefore let no private Aims and partial Affections influence you, but with a disinterested Concern for the publick Good, for which you are intrusted to act, let your Views be directed to such, as according to your best Understanding, will be most likely to answer the Character of Government now represented, and *to rule with GOD*: Men of known Ability and Integrity, who are cordial Friends to the best Interests of their Country, and also of personal Virtue and Piety.

And thus we may hope still to see our *Judges as at the first*, and our *Counsellors as at the beginning*, whose Authority and Influence may go far towards the reviving and maintaining of Godliness and Honesty among this People, that we may yet be called *the City of Righteousness, the faithful City.* ‡

‡ *Isai.* i. 26.

To this End,

Let me in the next Place apply my Discourse, in an humble Address to His EXCELLENCY OUR GOVERNOUR AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF, to the HONOURABLE HIS MAJESTY'S COUNCIL, together with the HONOURABLE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; and all that do or may bear Part in the publick Administration.

Suffer me (much honour'd and esteem'd) who am the least of our Lord's Messengers, being call'd * to speak in his Name this Day, to be an humble Remembrancer to you, whom divine Providence has made the Rulers and Leaders of this People, of those Things which have been represented as the Duty and the Honour of the Rulers of a professing People. The divine Counsel then to be laid before you is, That you would so discharge the Duty, that you may maintain the Character and Dignity of *Rulers with GOD.*

As GOD has honour'd your EXCELLENCY particularly, with the chief Seat of Government over a People, who are professedly subject to the Rule and Government of our Lord Jesus, so he has put you in a Capacity of being eminently serviceable to the Interests of his Kingdom among us, and has enlarg'd your Opportunities and Advantages for promoting the temporal Welfare and religious Interests of these Churches, to which we trust you are engag'd by Inclination and Choice, as well as Office and Profession, and by employing your Power and Influence for the Service of Christ and his People, you will thus, doubtless

* By the late Honourable House of Representatives.

answer the most valuable Ends of Government, and have the Honour of ruling with and for our blessed Redeemer, an Honour that shall survive the Monuments of all earthly Grandeur, and last to Eternity.

May I then be allow'd, with a becoming Deference and Humility, to suggest in a few Words, what our Expectations are from you, our honoured Fathers in the Government, under the Character of those that *Rule with GOD, and are faithful with the Saints.*

You will then improve the eminent Talents of Wisdom and Understanding, Interest and Authority, wherewith it has pleased GOD to dignify and distinguish you, for the Advancement of his Glory, and the Common Good, and in seeking the Welfare of your People, with a Spirit as publick as your Station and Influence; you will highly value, and on all Occasions appear in the Defence both of our Civil and Religious Rights and Liberties, which are intrusted to your Guardianship & Care.

You will also act with Zeal in maintaining that Righteousness, both Distributive, and Commutative, which is the Ground and Basis of Society, and of every happy Government. Particularly, it will be your Concern to endeavour by all proper Means to preserve the publick Credit in the present Medium of Exchange, the fluctating and sinking whereof, 'tis to be fear'd, is the Occasion of abundance of Injustice, Extortion and Oppression, and likely to be more so, (and how far a publick Guilt may be contracted on this Account, deserves well to be considered,) which calls upon the Wisdom and Justice of the Legislature to find out, and apply a timely Remedy to so great a Grievance.

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You will express a particular Concern for the Interest of Religion and GOD's Worship ; and take Care, as far as your Authority and Influence may extend, that the Ministers of Christ's holy Religion, the faithful and painful Labourers in Word and Doctrine, may not be defrauded of their just and reasonable Dues, thro' a Deficiency in the present Medium ; but that they may be supported and encouraged in the Service of Christ, and of Souls, the best Interests of a People, with such a Maintenance as is suitable to their Station, Character, and Employment, and as the Law of Christ intitles them to, which may raise them above Contempt, and enable them to give themselves wholly to their Work, free from the Incumbrance of Worldly Cares. A singular Pattern of this tender Concern for Religion, and the Ministers of it, you have in that godly King *Hezekiah*, to the Honour of whose Memory it is recorded, that he *spoke comfortably to all the Levites that taught the good Knowledge of the LORD* ; and took effectual Care that the Portion of Maintenance assign'd them by the Law of GOD should be duly rendred to them, *that they might be encouraged in the Law of the Lord* * And for as much as Learning is a necessary subservient Means of Religion, without which it must needs languish and fail, you will account the good Education of the Youth of this Land, Matter of the highest Importance, that they may be trained up in Learning and Virtue, for the Service of the next Generation : And that Inferiour Schools be duly upheld in our several Towns, so as that they may effectually answer the Design of the good Laws in that Case provided. And especially, as Patrons of Religion & Learning, you will always

* 2 Chron. 30. 22. and Chap. 31. 4

look on the College as intitled to your particular Smiles. What has been done so honourably by the Government for that Society the last Year, deserves a grateful Commemoration, and gives Hope that under the same generous Care, that Seminary may continue to flourish more and more, as our distinguishing Glory among the *American* Provinces.

But especially, you will exert your Authority for the Suppression of the Growth of Vice and Irreligion, prophane Swearing, Lying, Sabbath-breaking, Pride, Idleness, Injustice, Theft, Drunkenness, Fornication, and other Abominations that defile the Land, and bring down the Judgments of GOD upon it, who will surely visit a People for these Things, even a whole People and Land, if the Magistrate, his Vicegerent, neglects to do it by inflicting due Punishment on the particular Persons of Offenders. *Did not Achan the Son of Zerab commit a Trespass in the accursed Thing, and Wrath fell on all the Congregation of Israel? and that Man perished not alone in his Iniquity.* † And if the wholesome Laws in being against these Vices be had in Contempt by bold and daring Transgressors, either for Want of a zealous Execution of them, or for Want of severer Penalties to render them a greater Terror to Evil-Doers, you will readily understand what is to be done in these Cases without a Monitor.

Among the Sins that are meet to be punished by the Judge, I have mentioned that of *Pride*, which as it is a latent Evil in Mens Hearts, does not indeed fall under the Cognizance or coercive Power of the Magistrate, yet it may deserve Con-

† Josh. 22. 20.

sideration, Whether the visible Indications of this Vice, in the Excesses People of all Ranks run into in their Garb and Manner of Living, mayn't require some Correction, and whether nothing further may be done by sumptuary Laws for a Check and Restraint to this growing Extravagance, which is so evident a Token of our walking contrary to GOD under the humbling Rebukes of his Providence, and a threatening *Omen* of a shameful Fall. And would our pious Rulers, whose Exhortations we gladly receive, in their Proclamations for Days of Fasting and Prayer, to make penitent Confession of our manifold Sins that have provoked the righteous Anger of GOD against the Land, would they, I say, join with the sacred Orders the Ministers of Christ, as those that are *faithful with the Saints*, in bearing a more open and publick Testimony against the prevailing Sins of the Times, and in concerting proper Methods for the Reformation of them, it would greatly strengthen the Hands, and encourage the Hearts of the faithful in the Land, in their pious Endeavours to serve the Cause of Reformation, and might tend to put Vice out of Countenance.

In fine, You will regulate all your Counsels and Proceedings by the revealed Will of GOD, the supream unerring Rule of all Righteousness ; and you will lead and guide this People, as by your Authority, so by a bright Example of pure and undefiled Religion in all the Instances of it, both in your Personal and Relative Conduct.

These Things, I do but mention, having been (the most of them) more copiously urg'd and inculcated on former like Occasions. And such are the Things, My Fathers, which will be a Testimony for you, that you bear Rule on GOD's Side,
and

and with his Approbation and Concurrence : So you may expect the Smiles of Heaven on your Administration, and to be accepted of the Multitude of your Brethren ; so you shall be honour'd as Instruments by the Divine Blessing of recovering and saving a degenerate People, and of prolonging their Tranquility : Above all, your Praise shall be of GOD, and your Reward glorious , and we shall rejoice to see exhibited in the Government of this Land, so happy a *Prelude* of the Approaching Kingdom of Jesus Christ, which has been long the Matter of the Faith and Hope, and Prayer of GOD's People, when the Saints shall have the Dominion, and reign with Christ on Earth. And our Prayer shall always be, that GOD would think upon you for Good, according to all that you do for this People.

In the next Place, the Subject discours'd warrants an Application to the *Sacred Order*, the Reverend Pastors of these Churches ; whose Office design'd by the scriptural Titles of *Ministers of Christ, Stewards of the Mysteries of God, Overseers of the Flock*, spiritual Guides, Ambassadors, Watchmen, and the like, lays them under peculiar Obligations to be faithful to Him that hath appointed them, faithful in maintaining the true Faith and Worship, and the Government and Discipline of GOD's House.

Wherefore, my Reverend Fathers, & Brethren, Let us look on our selves, as Trustees of the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, on whom it is incumbent in Point of Faithfulness to our Trust, to take Care that it may pass thro' our Hands pure, and unadulterated to those that come after us : And as we have receiv'd it upon a full Conviction of its Divine Authority, as a sacred *Depositum* from the

the Hands of our pious Predecessors, and have been Witnesses to their Zeal for the Purity of the Faith, and of Gospel Institutions, so let us with equal Zeal and Care, in setting apart others to succeed us in the sacred Office, follow the Direction of the holy Apostle Paul to Timothy, to *commit the same to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also.* ‡ Let us also consider that the Exercise of that delegated Rule and Authority, which is committed to us in the House of GOD, consists in nothing else, but a prudent and faithful Application of the Word, and Administration of the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, so as that Christ himself may be seen to Rule in and by our Ministry; our Wisdom and Fidelity in this Matter will be very glorious in his Eyes. To this End, we must not fail to declare the whole Counsel of GOD, that we may be *pure from the Blood of all Men*; freely and faithfully reproving Sin in all Ranks, and testifying against the Corruption of the Times.

Divine Providence has cast our Lot in an Age of great Degeneracy and Licentiousness, and that we may abide faithful in such a Day, not only as common Christians in keeping our own Garments undefiled, but as Ministers of Religion, we need much of the Spirit of *Elijah*, to be clad with Zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and with Bowels of Mercies to precious immortal Souls, in calling Men to Repentance, to be mortify'd to the World, the Pleasures, Poms, and Vanities of it, and of an heavenly Mind and Temper, and to be Examples of strict Religion and Holiness to our Flocks; 'tis requisite we should lay out our selves in our Preaching and Conversation to revive and pro-

‡ 2 Tim. 2. 2.

mote the Life and Power of Godliness, chiefly recommending and inculcating, in the Course of our Ministry, the essential Points of Christianity. And if *we stand in God's Counsel, and cause his People to bear his Words*, we shall be most likely to speed in our Endeavours to *turn them* from their Evil Ways * For this End, we should be constant and earnest Intercessors for our People; and cry Day and Night to GOD for the pouring out of his Spirit on the Land, on which the good Success of all Means of Conversion & Reformation entirely depends.

And whatever Temptations and Discouragements our Ministry may be attended with, if we can but obtain Mercy to be faithful, whatever our Success be, the Consciousness of our Fidelity and Integrity will afford Matter of inexpressible Joy; and we may be assured of our Master's Approbation in that blessed *Euge*, than which we can have nothing greater in our Aim and Desire, *Well done good and faithful Servant.*

Lastly, Let me address a Call to this whole People in their Representative Body, to abide faithful to GOD in Communion with all the Saints, and especially in Imitation of those holy Men of GOD who laid the Foundation of these Churches, in their good Principles, their Faith & Piety, and christian Conversation. Your whole Interest is wrapped up in this, in being faithful to GOD, loyal and dutiful Subjects to the good Government he has set over us; the former necessarily infers the latter, Loyalty and Subjection to the Order of Magistracy, being a special Point of Religion,

* Jer. 23. 22.

in which we must manifest our Obedience to GOD. Consider it therefore, as that which is of the highest Importance to your spiritual and temporal Welfare, to be faithful to GOD in the Observance of his Covenant and Commandments.

The Churches of Christ in this Land are founded on a sacred Covenant, transacted between GOD and them, in a more solemn and explicit Manner than perhaps in most Churches in the World. And were we as faithful to our solemn covenant Engagements, it might reasonably be hop'd that GOD would as remarkably distinguish us with his Favours. As when he came upon Terms with *Israel* of old, and undertook their Protection, *He said, surely they are my People, Children that will not lie: That will not deal falsely and perfidiously with him, to whom they had vowed Fealty and Allegiance, so he was their Saviour.* * But on the other Hand, What can be expected as the Consequence of our treacherous and unfaithful Dealings in Covenant, but that he *will bide his Face from us*, and treat us as a very froward Generation, *Children in whom is no Faith*; as he threaten'd his People *Israel*. † And what an awful Threatning this is, *I will bide my Face from them*, and what Woe and Misery it carries with it, and draws after it, *Moses* declares, Deut. 31. 17. *Mine Anger shall be kindled against them in that Day, and I will forsake them, and I will bide my Face from them, and many Evils and Troubles shall befall them, so that they shall say in that Day, are not these Evils come upon us because our GOD is not among us?* The only Way to secure us against such fearful Consequences, is to repent and return

* *Isai.* 63. 8. † *Deut.* 32. 20.

from our Backsliding to a more conscionable and faithful observance of our covenanted Duty.

I purpos'd, (would the Time have permitted) to set before you, and earnestly recommend some special Instances of Duty, wherein GOD expects and requires you should give a Proof of your Loyalty and Fidelity to him, in Conformity to the Example of our godly Ancestors, and to the Practice of the Saints in all Ages. Let me mention only the general Heads, and so draw to a Close.

1. Your Loyalty and Faithfulness to GOD demands the strict Observance of all *moral Duties*, Righteousness, and Honesty, Charity, Sobriety, and Temperance. If you fail here, not only the Saints, but many virtuous Pagans, will rise up in Judgment against you, and condemn you.

2. The Observance of *positive Institutions*, the Duties of GOD's Worship, secret and social Prayer, attending on a Gospel Ministry, submitting your selves to your spiritual Guides, *who speak to you the Word of GOD, and watch for your Souls*; a strict Care to sanctify the Lord's Day, and reverently to approach the Lord's Table, observing all the Ordinances of the House of GOD in Communion with particular Churches. The free, and unmolested Enjoyment of such Gospel Institutions was the known Design of our Fathers in coming hither. These Things indeed do belong to the Form of Godliness; yet have they a vital Connection with the Power thereof, insonmuch that where this is wanting, they will be either wholly neglected, or but carelessly and superficially attended. But the Life and Power of Religion, wherever it is, will evidence it self in a strict Ob-

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servance of these divine Institutions, which are design'd for the Honour of GOD in the World, and a publick Testimony of his People's Loyalty and Subjection to him, which have ever been had in precious Esteem with all real Saints, as the Means of maintaining and improving their spiritual Life in Communion with GOD, till they arrive to immediate Vision in the Life of Heaven, and also as the Means of reviving the Power of Godliness when it is fallen into Decay. When it pleases GOD to send down his quickening Spirit upon a People, who have very much lost the Spirit and Life of Religion, and have degenerated into Lukewarmness and Formality, he ordinarily makes Use of the Instituted Forms of Religion among them, as the Vehicles of those heavenly Influences, particularly the Word preached and heard, Fasting and Prayer. And by this Means, Religion is propagated from Parents to Children, from one Generation to another. Wherefore

3 Another Article which demands your most serious Regards is the keeping up *Family Religion*, Family Instruction, Worship and Government. 'Tis not to be doubted, but that the Licentiousness of Youth, and most of the Iniquities that abound in the Land, are mainly owing to the criminal Remissness of Governours of Families, or of those that ought to be so, with respect to the religious Education of those under their Charge. And all that Magistrates or Ministers can do to reform them, will be to little Purpose, unless Heads of Families faithfully do their Part: And if there be any Hope of a more general Reformation and Amendment of what is amiss among us, it must chiefly be done by a more strict Care of Family Religion, and of the virtuous and pious Education of Youth. O remember the Charge of GOD that lies upon you

you with respect to your Children and Posterity, to teach them the fear of the Lord, by your Instruction, Examples, Counsels, and Prayers. Your Faithfulness to GOD, to your Children, and the publick Interest, requires it of you, that you take Care that they be well principled in Religion betimes : And if you desire that you and your's may be blessed with faithful *Abraham*, let it be your Ambition to imitate him in this Instance of his Faithfulness, of which GOD gives that honourable Testimony, Gen 18. 19. *I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

4. The last Thing which I would propose as the most necessary and important Instance of your Faithfulness to GOD, is, the Observance of *spiritual Evangelical Duties*, in a Life of Faith, Repentance, and unfeigned Love to GOD, and sincere Devotion to him ; seeking the Things above, and Communion with Christ, and Mortification to this World, the predominant Love whereof in Christian Professors (which prevails so much at this Day to the Consumption of the very Vitals of Religion) the Scripture taxes as an Instance of *spiritual Adultery*, and Disloyalty to GOD, as it is a Breach of the spiritual Marriage Covenant between him, and them, yea of *Enmity* to him. *To Adulterers, and Adulteresses, know ye not that the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God ? whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God. ** You cannot be loyal and faithful to GOD, if you suffer the World to rival him in your Affections ;

* James 4. 4.

nor is it consistent with the Character of real Saints. And as the Effect and Evidence of the Love of GOD, let me recommend that cordial undissembled Love one to another, that Peace, and Union, that Gospel *Charity which is the Bond of perfectness*, that Love between Magistrates and Subjects, Ministers and People, Neighbours and Brethren, in every Relation and Society, which is the Life and Strength, the Beauty and Glory of a Christian People, in Opposition to Strife and Variance, Enmities and Animosities, which apparently tend to weaken and dissolve Societies, and to introduce Confusion and every Evil Work. *But I forbear.*

Thus having, as the Time and my Talent would admit (tho', I fear, very imperfectly) presented to your View the Things, which I apprehend, are of greatest Importance at this Day, to the several Ranks and Orders to whom my Discourse has been applied: Suffer me now to make Use of the Words of *Moses*, in that moving Address to *Israel*, *Set your Hearts unto all the Words which I testify among you this Day---for it is not a vain Thing for you, because it is your Life, and thro' this Thing ye shall prolong your Days in the Land.* * And let me only add, that as it cannot be doubted, but that the Cause which our Fathers appeared for, was the Cause not of a Party or Sect, but common to all the loyal Subjects of Jesus Christ, yea, that it was the Cause of GOD, of Religion and Reformation may be so called, (the Things for which they express'd so ardent a Zeal, being the *Rights of Conscience*, or the Liberty of worshipping GOD as their Consciences were perswaded, and directed by his holy Word, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ,

* Deut. 32 46, 47.

both as to it's inward Power in real Religion, and it's visible Glory in the purity of Gospel Administrations,) so it might be on all Accounts our Interest, as we are bound in Honour and Conscience faithfully to adhere to and vigorously to pursue the same Glorious Cause; our Life and Happiness as a People in Covenant with GOD, is bound up in it: And on these Terms we may hope that GOD most High will appear for us, in all our Difficulties, and Straits, as our *Saviour*, Protector, and Benefactor. Very pertinent to this Purpose are the Words of a very renowned Person ‡ among our Fathers, in a Sermon preach'd by him in the Audience of the *General Court of the Colony of the Massachusetts*, above seventy Years ago.

“ The common Interest of the People of God
 “ (saith he) and of *Us* the Lord's People in special, is, the Interest of *practical Piety and Holiness*, --- the Interest of *unmixed spiritual Gospel Worship*; --- the Interest of *Unity, and Peace* in the Ways of Reformation; the Interest of these Things, and of just and righteous Liberty, in order thereunto: The Times are coming and hastening more and more, wherein Faithfulness to GOD in all these Things will be the most glorious *Crown* that can be worn upon Earth, a *Crown*, upon which it shall be graven, *Here is the Faith, and Patience of the Saints*. This then is the Word of the Lord to his *New England Churches*, *Let no Man take this your Crown from you!*” God grant we may all hear & obey this Word of the Lord, that is yet spoken to us. And

‡ The Honourable WILLIAM STOUGHTON, Esq; when he was Preacher of the Gospel at *Dorchester*, whence he was call'd successively to many Stations of the highest Figure in the civil Government. And when he dyed was *Commander in Chief* of the Province. See his Election Sermon, intitled, *New England's true Interest not to lie*.

To Conclude, Let us all heartily unite in that Prayer of Solomon, 1 King 8 57, 58. *The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our Fathers : Let him not leave us, nor forsake us. That he may incline our Hearts unto him, to walk in all his Ways, and to keep his Commandments, and his Statutes, and his Judgments, which he commanded our Fathers. To which Prayer, we have an Answer dictated from the same inspired Oracles, which carries in it a solemn Admonition to all, both Rulers and People, which deserves the closest Attention and Regard, in the Words of the Prophet Azariah, 2 Chron. 15. 2. Hear ye me, Aha, and all Judah, and Benjamin, the LORD is with you, while ye be with him : and if ye seek him, he will be found of you : but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.*

F I N I S.



